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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/S:STHIBEAULT AND
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBOURGEOIS, DBENZE AND
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA RWINCHESTER
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SUBJECT: Damascus Media Reaction: Syria/Kazakhstan,
Syria/Nigeria, Palestinian Territories, Lebanon, Iraq (6/26)

¶1. Summary: Syrian papers today reported President Asad's meeting with Yar Mohammed Aritsayiev, Kazakh Minister of Information and Culture, which focused on bilateral relations of cooperation, and prospects of boosting them in the economic, cultural, and social spheres.

Papers also reported President Asad's meeting with members of the General Secretariat and the Pan-Arab Follow Up and Coordination Committees for Arab Revolutionary Dialogue. President Asad explained current political developments and the nature of conspiracies that have been threatening the Arab nation's existence and identity. He clarified that Syria's policy and stances are based on its belief in the Arab nation's unified destiny and joint interests. Asad underlined the importance of Arab political powers' meetings on all levels, their dialogue, and their involvement with the nation's issues. "These meetings are very important to deepen pan-Arab consciousness, coordinate Arab efforts and to monitor events and developments in order to adopt subjective and decisive stances to confront endeavors of disinformation inflicted upon the nation," the President said. He emphasized the importance of strengthening pan-Arab sentiment in the life of the Arab masses as a common factor among all sections of Arab society.

Papers also reported official talks among VP Shara, FM al-Mouallem and Abu Bakr Tango, Nigerian State Minister for Foreign Affairs. Talks dealt with bilateral relations between the two friendly countries and means of bolstering them to meet the two countries' interests.

End of summary.

¶2. Selected Headlines:

"President Asad receives Kazakh Minister of Information and Culture, and members of the General Secretariat of the Arab Democratic Dialogue. The final statement of the Arab Democratic forum reflects interaction with the Arab Nation's issues, consolidates pan-Arab sentiment in the life of the masses, stresses solidarity with Syria, generalizes the culture of resistance, supports reform and modernization, and rejects foreign dictates" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 6/26)

"Syria and Nigeria hold official talks. VP Shara and FM Mouallem discuss with Nigerian FM Tango relations of cooperation between the two countries" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 6/26)

"Palestinian resistance carries out a unique operation; Seven Israel soldiers killed, wounded and missing" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 6/26)

"On the eve of resuming the Lebanese National Dialogue, new issues widen differences" (Government-owned Tishreen, 6/26)
"Terrorists kill four Russian diplomats in Iraq" (Government-owned Tishreen, 6/26)

13. Editorial Block Quotes:

"Reactivating Arab Solidarity and the Importance of Dialogue"

An unsigned editorial in government-owned Al-Ba'th, reads (6/26): "The time is ripe for dynamic common Arab action in light of Washington's search for a speedy and urgent exit from Iraq, the state of confusion in which Olmert's government is blundering, and the diminishing effect of the vicious Western onslaught on Syria and the collapse of many links in the conspiracy that has targeted Syria's steadfastness and impregnability....

"Asad's visit to Cairo and his telephone contact with King Abdallah of Jordan last week were part of the effort to create such Arab dynamism and save Arab performance from deadlock and paralysis.... Egypt and Syria have largely agreed on a joint vision regarding the situations in Iraq and Palestine, and this agreement reflects on many procedural steps that will unfold in

the future, contrary to what some media circles have tried to promote...."

"Peace Cannot Be Achieved by Wishes"

Ahmad Dawwa, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, said (6/26): "We regret that some Arabs have not yet realized that Israel cannot be pushed toward peace through wishes, conferences, and the making of demands.... This method, in fact, makes Israel more stubborn, arrogant, and aggressive and gives it more time to cook its plans against the West Bank over a low fire....

"The problem of Arabs is that they do not learn from the lessons of the past; they just remain silent when they find out, later, that their calculations were wrong. Some of them, evading responsibility, would not hesitate to say: We couldn't have done better....

"But what keeps hope alive for the restoration of usurped rights to their owners is the position of those Arabs who adhered to their rights, knew Israel's nature, refused to give in to the conditions of the International Quartet, and preferred martyrdom and confronting aggression to other options that Israel has exploited and from which Arabs have lost much more than they have gained."

"Compensation for Martyred Infants"

Izz-al-Din al-Darwish, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (6/26): "Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, through his appalling massacres against Palestinians, seeks to outperform former PM Sharon in killing, destruction, and

rejection of all elements of peace....

"Olmert rejects peace, besieges citizens of Gaza until death, kills Palestinian children, and says there is no Palestinian partner to negotiate peace with.... Yet he finds people to believe that he has good peaceful intentions, and he finds among the Arabs people who say: Let us give him a chance....

"Why give him this chance if he himself does not want it, and if his American allies see the killing of children as an act of self-defense...?"

"Why hold negotiations in the first place if Israel has already determined what it wants and stresses that it will not abandon any of it and that the Palestinian Authority has no choice but to accept this or else?"

"Olmert behaves as if he is the master of life and death in the region. He does not see the killing of Palestinian children as a crime. This is why the Palestinian resistance factions collectively told him: There is no truce from now on, and there will be no concessions no matter what the sacrifices. This means, among other things, giving these martyred children some of their rights and giving their families the moral sustenance to help them continue to live and compensate them for the loss of their children. Otherwise, who will compensate the martyred children...?"

"Israeli Endeavors to Play in The Palestinian Arena"

Muhammad al-Khadir, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Ba'th, wrote (6/26): "Israeli leaks about a plan to establish a temporary Palestinian state based on the second stage of the Roadmap reveal deep Israeli concern and suspicions that the Palestinians might reach a political agreement ending their differences and unifying their ranks.

"Israel is doing everything it can to undermine Palestinian national accord and push the Palestinians toward splits and infighting. But Palestinians are aware of the dangers around them, which is now pushing them to contain their differences and consolidate the dialogue based on the principle that all guns must be directed toward the occupier only and that fighting among the Palestinians is a red line...."

"The Mossad Group, A Real Danger for Lebanon"

Hasan Hardan, a commentator in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (6/26): "The disclosure of the Israeli spying and assassination network in Lebanon reminds the Lebanese people, in all their groups, that Israel is the real threat to Lebanon and the only main enemy that seeks day and night to sabotage Lebanon's security and stability and sow the seeds of sedition among its sons.

"The discovery of the network also shows the falsehood of the campaign that was launched to implicate Syria and its allies in the assassinations and weakens the logic that claims the resistance no longer has a role to play and a job to perform...."

"A Characterized War Crime"

Ali Nasrallah, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (6/26): "The massacre that American soldiers perpetrated in the Iraqi city of Hadithah, which was uncovered by chance,

was one of dozens and perhaps hundreds of massacres against innocent children, women, and elderly in Iraq.

"The US Administration and its senior officers and military commanders in Iraq tried and are still trying to cover up this and other similar massacres.... The US Administration continues to pressure the investigations in an attempt to evade responsibility and blame the whole thing on a small number of soldiers.

"The Abu Ghraib scandal, the Hadithah massacre, the Al-Ishaqi crime, and the famous incident in which American elements disguised in civilian Iraqi clothes were caught while preparing to plant bombs in Baghdad are examples of a systematic policy that the American occupation practices on the ground, making use of its criminal experience in various parts of the region. Such scandals, massacres, and established war crimes bring back to mind the American criminal practices in Vietnam....

"Leaders of the US Administration are directly responsible for the war crimes in Iraq; human duty dictates that they be brought before the competent international criminal court so that they can be questioned and so that justice can be served....

"The US massacres in Iraq also show that the Bush administration has failed to win the hearts and minds of the Iraqis and to bring stability to Iraq.... The continuation of this situation will make the United States pay heavy prices unless it soon arrives at a conviction that leads it to decide to end Iraq's occupation and set an urgent timetable for withdrawal from that country."

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